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Maine Song and Story Sampler

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1991

# Krakoviak

John Supruniuk

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### Recommended Citation

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Song: "Krakoviak"

Performer: John Supruniuk on the accordion

Town: Richmond, ME

NA 2257 CD 2161 Track 4

Collector: Jeff McKeen

Date: 1991

"**Krakoviak**" is a tune named after a style of dance that originated in the area around Kraków in southern Poland (there the dance is called *krakowiak*). The tune heard here is one of many variants of the song to which the dance is performed. Though it originated in Poland, the dance spread across almost all of Europe, from Russia (where it is known as *krakoviak*) to France (where it became known as *cracovienne*). The dance dates back to at least the 16th century, where it began as a folk dance, but was soon being published in songbooks. By the mid-nineteenth century, the song was a popular ballroom dance in much of Europe and was closely associated with the Polish struggle for independence during that era. Many now consider the *krakowiak* the "national dance" of Poland. At the same time, this dance style became popular among composers (such as Chopin) who transformed the tune. Originally a fast, lively, syncopated dance tune that featured two alternating parts, the tune and dance grew in scope and complexity with the addition of a third part (a contrasting middle section and key changes). Along with this shift of the tune to concert halls, the dance lost its popularity as a "functional dance" among the low and higher classes. The dance became an "exhibition" or performance piece with colorful costumes. The dance and its accompanying tune remains popular in this form.

For more information on this dance, visit the website of the Polish Music Center at the University of Southern California and read Maja Trochimczyk's essay on the *krakowiak*:

[www.usc.edu/dept/polish\\_music/dance/krakowiak.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/dance/krakowiak.html)